2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

since some accounts tell of being created at the Heart River while others tell of a migration along the Missouri from the southeast. This same inconsistency was recognized by Maximilian.[2] My informants did not consider this to be an inconsistency at all. Their explanation was that, when Lone Man made the land around the Heart River, he also made the land to the south as far as the ocean. He made fish people, eagle people, bear people, corn people, buffalo people, and others whose history was inaugurated into myths of the sacred bundles. These various people were born into the Mandan tribe by magical means, thus populating the lands.

The large number of village sites belonging to a single archeological focus adjacent to the Missouri River both below and above the junction with the Heart River indicates that the tribe at one time numbered several thousand, possibly as much as seven or eight thousand, while the depth of refuse establishes continuous residence there of several centuries.

THE MANDAN HOUSEHOLD

The household was the smallest economic unit and was composed of one or more biological families related through the females. Theoretically, the household was held together by females so long as their lineage was unbroken and the lodge belonged to the clan of which the females were members. When a village was first built on a new site, each household selected a site for its lodge, corn scaffolds, and caches. There was a tendency for related families to select adjacent quarters, while those intimately connected with the Okipa ceremony selected lodge sites adjacent to the open circle. These lodge sites within the village were held permanently within the female line, and, when returning to rebuild after a temporary abandonment of the village, female descendants of the original builders were entitled to their former sites. When a family died out, the lodge belonged to the clan of the females and could be occupied by another group of the same clan or could be sold to females of a different clan. My informants emphatically denied that abandoned lodges could be occupied until they had received permission

2. *Ibid.*, XXIII, 307–8. There is some inconsistency present, since other myths imply that the Mandan have been on or near the Heart River since the creation of man by Lone Man.

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

either of the nearest relatives or of the clan to which the lodge belonged. They believed that the lodge had a spirit which would have sent bad luck to one taking possession illegally.

The females of the lodge owned in common the domestic goods consisting of bedding, pots, household and gardening tools, the dogs, gardens, the wooden mortar and pestle, and the mares and colts. Clothing and personal effects were held individually. The men owned their weapons used in warfare and hunting as well as their own clothing and pipes. Men also owned the stallions and geldings. Sacred tribal bundles were held collectively by the man and his wives.

Lodges were built with little ceremony; the only rites were performed at the cutting of the notches for the four center posts when an old woman having the right to cut the posts was called in to sing one song and pray for the family's success. She received one robe for her services. It was the duty of the clan to assist in the erection of a member's lodge. Since these lodges were large, a considerable amount of work was entailed in erecting one and covering it with poles, willows, grass, and earth.[3] As a rule, the clan prepared a feast and invited the opposite moiety to assist, in which case the clans assisted according to the seating arrangement of the men in the Okipa or in council.

Mandan informants state that in earlier times each household had one or more game pits. These pits were dug by all the members of the household and were owned collectively. While the men would bring the poles for the cover and kill the game caught in them, the women frequently did most of the work of excavating and removing earth from the area of the pit. In recent times many households had fishtraps which are believed to have been used since introduced by Black Wolf. Fish bones, particularly catfish bones, are very abundant in the Heart River villages. The ceremonies associated with the trapping of fish, particularly the catfish, were performed by the older men, but the women assisted in weaving the walls for the trap and in sorting and cleaning the fish.

There was considerable variability in the status of household

3. For a report of the amount of materials used in the completion of an earth lodge see George F. Will, "The Mandan Lodge at Bismarck," *North Dakota Historical Quarterly*, Vol. V, No. 1 (October, 1930).

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

In most instances, the unit of extension is the clan, but these relationships are based on individual relations and groups. This point will be further developed in the analysis of the ceremonial structure.

The following behavioristic pattern prevailing between relatives will illustrate this point. For any individual the total number of relationships into which he entered largely determines his "social personality." The most basic of these are between the members of the elementary family, the parents and the children, but in Mandan society this is frequently modified by the presence of old women of the lodge who occupy a virtual second-mother position. An elementary family consisting of parents and children rarely occupied a lodge to the exclusion of all other relatives. There are eight possible combinations of relatives within an elementary family with a general pattern of behavior existing between each pair. They are:

Mother–daughter (*na'E'–mi'nuhą'kE*).—An intimate bond of love and affection existed between a mother and her daughter. Not a single instance of quarreling or serious difference was remembered by the Mandan informants, nor were there disputes over property held in common. They worked together in the gardens or performed domestic tasks in the lodge and were very intimate in their daily relations. She taught the child to grind corn and cure meat, to make baskets and clay pots, to dress hides, to color porcupine quills for decorating clothing, and to care for her own personal effects. She taught her daughter to make a small payment, a small colored bead or a few kernels of corn, for each little skill taught her, thus establishing at an early age a significant behavioristic pattern of paying those who taught her a new skill, a myth or song, or who received her into a rite or dance. Usually there were other women in the lodge whom she addressed as "Mother," and, if one of these had no daughter of her own, she would take over or adopt a daughter from the lodge unit for especial affection and care. Frequently the father's older sister, if she had no one to care for her, would come to the lodge to live when the lodge was one that had been erected or owned in the father's line and the mother had come here to live when marrying because the father was needed to care for his relatives who were old. She was called "daughter"

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

by the father's sister and treated as a daughter. She, on the other hand, thought of the father's sister as a special relative, one who was between the mother and the grandmother and was taught to speak of her as "my little grandmother." She was considered a special "holy woman" who on certain occasions, particularly when a brother or sister died, performed the rites of sending the spirit away.

All the women of the lodge addressed as "mothers" were treated with respect, and all contributed to the daughters' training.

Mother–son (*na'E'–miniks'*).—The same bonds of love and affection existed between the mother and son as was shared between the mother and daughter. It was based on a close kinship bond, though partially modified by sex dichotomy. As a small child he received the same affection as his sisters. The mother would make toys for his amusement, and, when he was three or four years old, she taught him to give her small items such as a few beads or other trinkets in payment for an especially well-decorated robe, moccasins, or leggings. His mother's brother or an older sibling would assist him in securing presents for the mother. His first knowledge about the clan would come from the mother; she would tell him of men of the clan who had been brave in battle, had brought rain for the crops, had been especially kind to the old people of the clan, or had distinguished themselves in other ways. She taught him not to play in front of the platform at the head of the lodge where the ceremonial paraphernalia was kept and explained that, if he obeyed the older men and was industrious and brave, he would some day be custodian of the bundle. His mother encouraged him to join a Boys Society. The son, as a young single man, assisted in the buffalo hunt and helped his parents with the butchering. If the sister married, she was expected to bring her husband to the lodge. Then, when he married, he would live with his wife in another lodge. As a married man this deep affection for his mother and her sisters continued. When returning with meat, knowing she was without fresh meat, he would go to her lodge first and give her the choicest portions before returning to his wife's family. She received the most valuable mare taken on his first horse-stealing raid if his sisters were small. This bond of

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

affection continued while his mother lived. Although it was considered improper for a man to be alone in the lodge with his daughter, nothing was thought of a son being alone with his mother.

Father–daughter (*tatE'–mi'nuhą'kE*).—The father was a respect relative providing he remained married to the daughter's mother, otherwise he was generally disregarded, since children of divorced mates were reared by the mother. He was expected to provide for the daughter and, in those families where the father and mother were successfully mated, co-operated with his wife in the training of the children. He avoided being alone with his daughter in the lodge.

Father–son (*tatE'–miniks'*).—A son treated his father with a respect which was sacred in character as he was informed at an early age of his father's fasting and war record and was taught to believe that the family's possession of property and good health was attributable to the father's fasting, respect for sacred objects, and kindness to the old people. The father was expected to provide meat for the family, but he took little part in the care of the son until he was old enough to understand the sacred character of certain objects in the lodge. When the son was old enough to play in the group games, he was encouraged to participate and was given game objects. He was encouraged to fast during the Okipa, if for only a day, and his father would loan him a small item from his personal bundle to wear while fasting. The father was an adviser but not a punishing member of the family. The mother or her brother would teach him to seek advice regularly of the father and present him with a small article of value each time the father offered him significant information. The father would explain that the members of his own clan were the son's "fathers" and that he should seek their advice also. By the time a young man was sixteen or seventeen years of age, the advice of distinguished males of the father's clan was frequently sought, and it was their duty, in the event that the son was killed while away from the village, to see that his skull was returned to the village and placed at one of the shrines.

Husband–wife (*mi'woro–mų'hE*).—The Mandan have several terms for a husband and wife. A man addresses his wife as

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

and the extended household preserved the structure in spite of numerous separations of individual families.

When marriage was by exchange of gifts and a feast, and the husband lived with his wife's people, he held prior claim to the wife's sisters as they became of marriageable age, and such marriages were encouraged.

Older brother–younger brother (*mų'kas–mi'cų'ka*).—The bond between brothers was very strong. It was based on common blood and residence and included all in the household who stood in an older brother–younger brother relationship. There was no distinction between siblings and children of the mother's sister if all had a common residence. Older brothers cared for their younger brothers, taught them games and the care of the horses, and teased each other mildly. Quarrels were rare and soon forgotten. The older brother who had participated in the ceremonies would urge the younger brother to follow his example and would assist his younger brother in collecting materials to be presented to the father's clan. If the younger brother showed little interest in fasting or ceremonial participation, the older brother could and frequently did severely criticize him. If a brother were killed in battle, his brother was expected to inflict self-torture and to revenge his death. He also had first claim to his brother's widow, and she could not marry until he made known his intentions.

When grown up and married, brothers co-operated in providing for their mother's household. Brothers co-operated in the purchase of ceremonial bundles and rites. This intimate bond continued for life and was extended to include mother's sister's son's and father's brother's sons, the feeling of nearness being determined by residence and participation in joint activities.

Older sister–younger sister (*mirukE'–ptą'ka*).—The bond between sisters was very strong and was based largely on common blood, mutual activities, and lifelong residence together. No distinction was made between sisters with different fathers, even when the fathers were of different clans. Neither was distinction made between one's own sisters and daughters of the mother's sister if all grew up together in the same household. There was not, however, the same close bond of affection with "sisters" of the father's second wife when his second wife occu-

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

pied a separate lodge. In fact, there was likely to be mild resistance when the girl's own household disapproved of the other marriage which they were obliged to tolerate because of the absence of mature males in their own household. The older sister acted as a "little mother" to her younger sisters, looking out for them while the mother was in the garden or at work tanning hides. When the older sister married, each of the younger sisters became an eligible mate, and frequently sisters remained together through life, possessing a common husband. They inherited the mother's household and gardens, and the oldest sister became the head of the household. When there were several sisters, the younger ones who did not wish to marry the older sister's husband would move into a lodge where the females were of their clan and closely related, helping the household with their work in the gardens. Her brother would select a husband for her and provide for the exchange of goods so that, when the older women died, she would have exclusive possession of a lodge of her own. In the late historic villages, it was often impossible to find space for additional lodges, since all were closely grouped within a fortification.

Quarrels between sisters were generally unknown, and younger sisters who moved to another lodge did so out of respect to the married sisters, believing that a man having too many wives would not be able to provide for all of them. A sister would raise children of a deceased sister, and, the tribe being matrilinear, there was no change of clans. The relations of sisters to each other and to the mother was the foundation of the Mandan household and was based on the inheritance of the lodge, lodge property, and the gardens. A daughter was expected to help the mother and to take over her mother's property when she died.

Brother–sister (*mi'cu'ka–ptami'hE*).—Brothers and sisters played together when young, and there was a close bond of affection between them. As they grew older, they avoided being alone together, and the prevailing games and economic activities separated them. Even after marriage, a man considered his mother's household his own. After his mother's death, his interest in his sister and her household continued. He would bring her portions of fresh meat from animals he had killed. If she had no horses, when returning from a raiding expedition, he would

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

603 the same clan as the boy's father, on occasions he received presents from his grandson during the ceremonies. A man addressed
[601] as "grandchild" the wives of all those men he addressed as "son" and the spouses of all he addressed as "grandchild."

603 *Grandmother–grandchild* (*maxis'–ptawi'hąkE*).—The mater-
844 nal grandmother was always present and assisted in the birth and care of her daughter's child and the paternal grandmother was expected to carry out the other's instructions. In case the paternal grandmother had a superior ceremonial bundle and a good reputation for successful deliveries, she was asked to take charge. The child's closest affection was for the grandmother belonging to the lodge group. The grandmother would make clothing for her grandchildren and teach them stories. The paternal grandmother delighted in preparing nice robes and other clothing for son's children and would invite them to her lodge to eat, when she would dress them in the pretty clothes. Informants thought that the father's mother showed more affection for a grandchild than a maternal grandmother, since the former did not have them under foot every day. They thought that grandmothers had a tendency to get cross as they grew old and that the maternal grandmother, while scolding children for jumping on her bed, would scold her own daughter if she thought the children were not treated right.

603 A grandmother was more closely associated with her grand-
868 daughter than her grandson. She would teach the granddaugh-
601 ter the arts of dressing hides and making pottery, and she expected payment for this instruction. The grandson was expected to give her meat if she met him at the outskirts of the village without having to ask him for it. This obligation to give meat to a grandmother was extended to include all females addressed as "grandmother." A woman addressed as "grandchild" the wives of all those men she addressed as "son" and the spouses of all she addressed as "grandchild."

604 *Mother's brother–sister's child* (*pta'warato'dE–ptu'hakE*).—The
592 mother's brother was a very important relative in the Mandan matrilinear system, as he had considerable authority over his
613 sister's household even when living in another household. As an occupant of his wife's lodge, he was a subordinate member, but in his sister's lodge, by virtue of his position as the oldest male

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

clan member, he was titular head of the lineage. This authority was nominally vested in the oldest male clan member of the household, and the mother's brother assumed this authority when his own mother's brother died or was too feeble to get around. A clan chief was the most distinguished of the mother's brothers of the households comprising the clan. He had considerable authority over his sister's children. He would scold them and frequently ducked a sister's son in the river. At the same time he assumed the responsibility for their final education and participation in the ceremonies and assisted them in the accumulation of robes and horses for ceremonial purchases. He would urge his sister's sons to fast during the ceremonies and would see that they came out. He would tell his sister's sons that the people of the other clans would tease them if his clan was not well represented. He would take his sister's son with him on war expeditions to teach him success in that enterprise.

The mother's brother began early the training of his sister's sons and daughters in the rites of certain tribal bundles and was assisted by the children's mother. It was believed that some young people would not live to maturity; therefore, it was necessary to begin the instruction early in life so that several would know the rites to prevent the bundles from getting out of the household. Since many tribal bundles, particularly those of the Okipa, descended through the closest related male members of the clan, the mother's brother was an important relative for the perpetuation of the ceremonial office within the household. The rule of inheritance for tribal bundles belonging to the clan was: mother's mother's brother; mother's brother; older brother; sister's male child; sister's daughter's male child. Failure to have a qualified male of the household prepared to perform a specific role in the tribal ceremonies would provoke criticism and lead to eventual relinquishment of the bundle.

Father's sister–brother's child (*ptu'minikE-minuha'kE; ptu'-minikE-koni'kE*).—The Mandan speak of the father's sister as a "little grandmother." She was a respect relative by virtue of her possession of certain rights in her brother's bundles. She helped her mother when a brother's child was born and was invariably the one called upon to name a female child, supplying a name associated with a bundle owned in common with her brother.

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

meanwhile her parents frequently made arrangements to bring them to the daughter's parental lodge to live. They constructed a side passage from the door so that the son-in-law could enter his section of the lodge without meeting his mother-in-law, and he was expected to remain in his quarters when she was in the lodge. When the lodge was ready, the girl's father presented her husband with a horse or other goods and invited them to live with them.

When a man married the oldest sister, he was entitled to marry the younger ones as they became of age by giving them horses. Her parents built additional beds in the son-in-law's section. There was no wedding feast or exchange of goods.

A third method of marrying was known as "marriage by mutual agreement." Two people attracted to each other decided to marry without consulting their parents. Sometimes a girl did not approve of her sisters' husband and decided not to marry him. She encouraged a young man so that she could get away from her mother's household. She received two or three horses from her husband and left her parents to live in her husband's lodge. If she had a number of sisters and did not like their husband, she would remain in her husband's lodge and help the women of the household. Whether or not this residence became permanent depended on a number of factors. When the lodge was already occupied by her husband's sisters and their husband, she would attempt to move out with her husband to a household of old women of her clan, especially one where there were no men to provide for the household. Eventually she would inherit the lodge, household goods, and gardens when the old people died. On the other hand, should her husband have no sisters, she would prefer to care for her parents-in-law, whom she treated as "grandparents" and addressed as such, and they would treat her as a woman of the lodge. When they died, she would inherit the lodge, household goods, and gardens.

As a resident of the husband's lodge, a woman's position was subordinate to the other female members of the household group. In case of a quarrel, she was obliged to leave. Should her husband be killed or die, leaving small children and his brother was unable to marry her because of an unco-operative wife, she was sent out of the lodge and was permitted to take

2: Bowers E-5 (1930-1931)1950 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

592 768 421 only her clothing and children. Even the bedding belonged with the lodge and could not be taken whether she had assisted in tanning and preparing them or not. Responsibility for the children's care rested with her sisters and the female members of her clan.

586 837 578 431 583 Divorce was easy and common. The elopement of a married woman having children with a married man also having children was the cause of much trouble, since it involved so many people. Learning that their brother had eloped with another man's wife, the brothers and sisters would take horses and other property to the injured man to prevent him from causing them injury, since they were accountable for a sibling's conduct. Learning that his wife had run away with another man, he was entitled to retaliate against the man's brothers and sisters and would start killing their horses. My Mandan informants enjoyed relating instances when the brothers and sisters, learning that a brother had eloped with another man's wife, had reached the lodge before the wife was missed. They would come to his lodge in a group leading the horses. Seeing the people with horses, he would hurry into his lodge or go through the village calling for his wife. People considered it very humorous to surprise a man in that way, and it was the subject of gossip for quite a while. He was expected to accept the horses and forget his wife. The elopers usually visited the Crow Indians until 586 837 578 583 the husband was reconciled to his loss. When a prominent man lost his wife, he would usually organize a war party or go out alone against the enemy. He could disregard his former wife, and those most concerned with public opinion usually did. However, a man of position usually called her into his lodge when she returned from her elopement, painted and dressed her, mounted her on a good horse, and took her back to her new husband. Those who cried because a wife eloped or who attempted to take her back or agreed to let her return if she requested it were considered weaklings and not worthy of respect. Bear on the Water, a Mandan, stole the young Arikara wife of Four Bears, the principal war chief of the Hidatsa. While they were away, Four Bears made so many threats that the Mandan were obliged to leave the village for fear of war. He refused to accept horses or to smoke the pipe with Bear on

3:Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

over which a pot hung, were low seats of flexible willow boughs.

Henry's description[1] of the interior is probably the best, and is substantially as follows: on entering you first saw a kind of triangular apartment on the left fronting the fire, and leaving an open space on the right; this was to hold firewood. The partition was of squared planks twelve feet high, well calked to keep off the cold from the door. Between this and the fire was a space where the master sat on a mat of small willows supported as a sort of sofa and covered with a buffalo robe. On this the man sat all day and received his friends. To the left of the host began a range of beds. The master occupied the first bed with his favorite wife, then a wife occupied each of the next few beds, then came the young people. These beds were all built alike[2] and adjoined each other lengthwise. At the bottom of the hut facing the master stood his medicine stage containing everything he valued, and most important among them was a pair of bulls' heads daubed with earth. Here also hung his arms, ammunition, scalps and the like. Next to the stage was the mortar, fixed in the ground, and a pestle. The rest of the hut from there to the door was separated off for the horses at night.

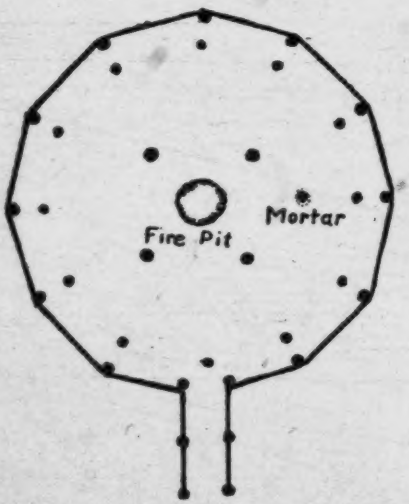

FIG. 3. MANDAN HOUSE.
(After Morgan.)

To this description might be added a few details from Catlin. He says that the cabins usually held a family and all its connections, from twenty to forty people. The beds were raised about two feet from the floor, were usually ten or twelve in number, four or five feet apart, and went all the way around.

[1] Op. cit., vol. I, pp. 339-40.

[2] See for description, p. 113.

6: Wied-Neuwied T-5 (1832-1834) 1843 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

262 which is so favourite a dish among the northern Indians, is not much in use among the Mandans. Their only drink is water, for they are unacquainted with the method of preparing fermented [273] liquors. They did not obtain any spirits, either from the American Fur Company, or the agents of Messrs. Soublette and Campbell; hence an intoxicated person is scarcely ever seen. They are extremely fond of sugar, and likewise of salt, which they procure from their lakes, and, if the supply is insufficient, purchase from the Whites. They are likewise fond of coffee and tea, well sweetened. It has been affirmed, that several North American nations, especially those which speak the Algonquin language, are cannibals, and more particularly the Chippeways and the Potawatomis; but I found no trace of this unnatural custom among the Missouri nations.

592 Two, and sometimes three, families usually live together in an Indian hut, commonly the
595 father, with his married sons or sons-in-law. Polygamy is everywhere practised, and the number
596 of wives differs; however, they have very seldom more than four, and, in general, only one. The women are very skilful in various kinds of work, particularly in dyeing and painting the buffalo
386 robes. They extract a red colour from the roots of the savoyenne, or from buffalo berries; yel-
824 low from a lichen of the Rocky Mountains; black from helianthus, as well as from a black stone
439 or clay; blue and green they extract from European substances. Among the Mandans, Manitaries, and Arikkaras, the women, as Lewis and Clarke relate, manufacture beads from coloured glass. They powder those which they have obtained from the traders, and mould them into different shapes. This custom is, however, no longer common. The dyeing of the skins, of
323 which many travellers have spoken, employs a great portion of the women's time. These three nations understand the manufacture of earthen pots and vessels, of various forms and sizes. The clay is of a dark slate colour, and burns a yellowish-red, very similar to what is seen in the burnt tops of the Missouri hills. This clay is mixed with flint or granite, reduced to powder by the action of fire. The workwoman forms the hollow inside of the vessel by means of a round stone which she holds in her hand, while she works and smooths the outside with a piece of poplar bark. When the pot is made, it is filled and surrounded with dry shavings, and then burnt,
501 when it is ready for use. They know nothing of glazing. With respect to their boats, the North Americans are far more expert than the Brazilians, Patagonians, and other South Americans, who live on the banks of rivers, and yet have contrived no means to pass them. The Chippeways and other northern nations have handsome vessels of birch bark; the Esquimaux makes his kiack, which is curiously covered with seal skin; and on the Missouri, especially among the Mandans, there are boats of buffalo skin, which are represented in the plates accompanying this work. They are very light, of a circular form, stretched on a frame of several pieces of wood crossing each other, and may be carried on the shoulder of a single individual.

584 If a young Indian desires to marry, and has obtained the consent of the girl, he endeavours to procure that of her father; when he is certain of this, he brings two, three, nay, even eight or

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

361 342 the lodge. These floors or foundations are all perfectly circular, and varying in size in proportion to the number of inmates, or of the quality or standing of the families which are to occupy them. The superstructure is then produced, by arranging, inside of this circular excavation, firmly fixed in the ground and resting against the bank, a barrier or wall of timbers, some eight or nine inches in diameter, of equal height (about six feet) placed on end, and resting against each other, supported by a formidable embankment of earth raised against them outside; then, resting upon the tops of these timbers or piles, are others of equal size and equal in numbers, of twenty or twenty-five feet in length, resting firmly against each other, and sending their upper or smaller ends towards the centre and top of the lodge; rising at an angle of forty-five degrees to the apex or sky-light, which is about three or four feet in diameter, answering as a chimney and a sky-light at the same time. The roof of the lodge being thus formed, is supported by beams passing around the inner part of the lodge about the middle of these poles or timbers, and themselves upheld by four or five large posts passing down to the floor of the lodge. On the top of, and over the poles forming the roof, is placed a complete mat of willow-boughs, of half a foot or more in thickness, which protects the timbers from the dampness of the earth, with which the lodge is covered from bottom to top, to the depth of two or three feet; and then with a hard or tough clay, which is impervious to water, and which with long use becomes quite hard, and a lounging place for the whole family in pleasant weather—for sage— for wooing lovers—for dogs and all; an airing place—a look-out—a place for gossip and mirth—a seat for the solitary gaze and meditations of the stern warrior, who sits and contemplates the peaceful mirth and happiness that is breathed beneath him, fruits of his hard-fought battles, on fields of desperate combat with bristling Red Men.

342 353 [354] The floors of these dwellings are of earth, but so hardened by use, and swept so clean, and tracked by bare and moccassined feet, that they have almost a polish, and would scarcely soil the whitest linen. In the centre, and immediately under the sky-light (PLATE 46) is the fire-place—a hole of four or five feet in diameter, of a circular form, sunk a foot or more below the surface, and curbed around with stone. Over the fire-place, and suspended from the apex of diverging props or poles, is generally seen the pot or kettle, filled with buffalo meat; and around it are the family, reclining in all the most picturesque attitudes and groups, resting on their buffalo-robes [592] 352 and beautiful mats of rushes. These cabins are so spacious, that they hold from twenty to forty persons—a family and all their connexions. They all sleep on bedsteads similar in form to ours, but generally not quite so high; made of round poles rudely lashed together with thongs. A buffalo skin, fresh stripped from the animal, is stretched across the bottom poles, and about two feet from the floor; which, when it dries, becomes much contracted, and forms a perfect sacking-bottom. The fur side of this skin is placed uppermost, on which they lie with great comfort, with a buffalo-robe